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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-first year

Identical letters dated 21 June 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Israel, the occupying Power, continues to carry out targeted military attacks against densely populated civilian areas in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, murdering innocent and defenceless Palestinian civilians, including children, in grave breach of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, compounding the long and growing list of war crimes it has been committing against the Palestinian people under its occupation since 1967.

On 20 June 2006, the Israeli occupying forces launched another deadly air strike against a civilian area in the Gaza Strip, causing an explosion on a narrow street in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City and killing three children who were playing outside their home. Two of the children killed were only 5 years old, Mohammed Jamal Al-Rouka and Nadia Al-Sharif, and a 16-year-old boy, Bilal Al-Hassi, was also killed by the missiles launched from Israeli fighter jets deliberately targeting a car travelling on that street. More than 14 other Palestinians were wounded in the attack, including seven children, many of whom remain in critical condition.

The consecutive military attacks carried out by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians in recent weeks are a stark reminder that there is absolutely nowhere for Palestinian children and their families to be safe in the Occupied Palestinian Territory — not inside their homes, not while playing together outside their homes, not on the beach, not in their schools, not in their markets, not in their streets, nowhere — from the wrath and brutality of the occupying Power. Since the beginning of the month of June, at least 49 civilians, including eight children, have been killed as a result of the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the occupying Power, which continues to carry out targeted assassinations and rain missiles down on the civilian population in a barrage of military raids. The reality is that Palestinian families — civilians who under international law are

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entitled to protection — are living under Israel's occupation in constant terror and fear of the next attack that will claim yet another innocent life and cause even more suffering, loss and hardship.

The situation in the Gaza Strip has been particularly severe, with repeated violent military assaults claiming the lives of civilians almost daily. These horrific events also serve to remind us that the so-called Israeli disengagement from Gaza in no way ended the occupation of this impoverished and densely populated part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which remains under Israeli siege and attack. Currently, there are rising fears that the situation in Gaza will deteriorate even further as reports are circulating regarding the possibility of a massive Israeli military incursion into Gaza. The withdrawal of international monitors from the Rafah border today has intensified the fear that such an incursion will in fact soon be carried out.

The international community, including the Security Council, must not allow this situation to continue and to further spiral downward. Serious action must be taken to bring a halt to Israel's violations and crimes against the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation, including measures to provide them with the necessary protection. The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention are bound by the legal obligations they have undertaken to respect and ensure respect of the Convention in all circumstances and should not continue to allow such grave breaches to continue to be committed by Israel with flagrant impunity.

In this regard, it is our firm belief that had serious action been taken by the international community in the immediate aftermath of recent Israeli attacks, including the attack of 9 June that killed Palestinian civilians — 10 members of the same family — on a beach in Beit Lahiya in the Gaza Strip, perhaps a different message would have been sent to the occupying Power that could have helped to avert the continuation of the series of lethal military attacks. At the very least, an official, impartial investigation, as requested by several groups, into the 9 June beach attack should be undertaken, which would convey a strong message to Israel that it will be held accountable for its violations of international law and that it is expected to scrupulously comply with its obligations under international law, including as an occupying Power under international humanitarian law. In light of the continuing attacks and continuing deterioration of the situation on the ground, we reiterate our call upon the international community to undertake the necessary measures to redress this grave situation.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 246 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 13 June 2006 (A/ES-10/338-S/2006/388), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Accordingly, in follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, it is my deep regret to inform you that since my last letter to you at least 12 more Palestinian civilians, including children, have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, raising the total

number of martyrs killed since September 2000 to 3,926. (The names of the martyrs that have been identified are listed in the annex to the present letter.)

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations